

No 219 T: W O *Class B2*

SERMONS:

Wherein is shewn how

John 2

God is the Chiefest Good

EITHER IN

HEAVEN or EARTH,

AND

How He may be Ours.

ON

PSAL. LXXIII. 25.

*Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and
there is none upon Earth that I desire
besides thee.*

By EDMUND GODWIN.

LONDON,

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TO THE

Right Honourable

JOHN & the LORD
AND AND
FRANCES & LADY
HAVERSHAM.

Much Honoured,

I Beg the Favour of Your
Honour, and Religious
Lady, to let your Names
stand before this Little
Book: I doubt not, but
the Great GOD, from whom all
true Honour comes, will find You

The Epistle

in the Catalogue of his Worthies, in that Day, when He comes to make up His Jewels. It was the Saying of a King, when a Treatise of Happiness was presented to him, That he was not at leisure; a Strange thing for a Man not to be at leisure to learn to be happy! But my hope is, that Your Honours, that spend much Time that way, will spare some, to look over this little Book; the chief tendency of which is, to lead You to Eternal Felicity, and to the enjoyment of Him that is the Chiefest Good.

*When I presented Your Ladyship with my last, You were pleas'd to prevent my Expectation with
your*

Dedicatory

your Charity; and withal, to tell me, That You had not yet read it over. Doubtless the Subject was such as did concern you, because it directed you to Twelve straight Gates, that Persons must be willing to go through, that will get to Heaven: It is that which I wish to you both, and for that purpose have I put this small Piece into your Hands. It is said of Julius Cæsar, that the Night before he was slain a Friend sent him a Letter, to acquaint him with it, that he might avoid the danger; but he neglecting the reading of it, was slain the next Day. It is good therefore to follow the Advice the Apostle gives, 1 Tim. vi. 19. 10 lay hold of Eternal Life, that is
a Life

The Epistle

a Life worth the laying hold of;
And how can that be done better,
than by laying hold on the Living
GOD by a lively Faith, who is
the Chiefest and Unchangeable
Good? As for this Temporal
Life, we can no more lay hold on
that, than we can of a Bubble
in the Water, or grasp a Shadow,
to which it is likened, Psal. 39.
It is very uncertain indeed when
Death will come, but when he
doth come, he strikes home, he
need not strike the second time;
he comes as Ehud did to Eglon,
with a Message from God; and
as that Ambassador, after he had
deliver'd his Message to a King,
made a Circle about him, and told
him plainly, He must have an

An-

Dedicatory.

Answer before he went out of that Circle. Now how can we better answer Death when he comes, than by laying hold on Him that is the Lord of Life, and the Chiefest Good? Then you may answer Death as the Martyr did the Tyrant, Occidere potes sed non possis lædere; You may kill me, but you cannot hurt me. So Death, if we have an Interest in GOD, he may cause us to die, but he cannot kill us with death as he did Jezebel's Children, Revel. ii. 23.

So that if Your Honours can but get an Interest in GOD the Chiefest Good, you need not fear
but

The Epistle, &c.

but it will go well with you to
all Eternity : Which is most
earnestly desir'd, and pray'd for,
by

Your daily Oratour,

Nov. 22.

1701.

at the Throne of Grace,

Edmund Godwin.

SER-

S E R M O N I.

How GOD is the Chiefest Good,
either in Heaven or Earth ;
and how He may be ours.

O N

P S A L. LXXIII. 25.

*Whom have I in Heaven but thee ? and
there is none upon Earth that I desire
besides thee.*

WE find the Prophet, in this *Psalms*,
to be greatly afflicted, and great-
ly tempted ; the ground of his
Temptation was, the great Pro-
sperity of the Wicked, and his own and
the Godly's great Adversity. As for the
Wicked, they prosper'd when he was
plagued, they escaped scotfree when he
was afflicted all the day long, and chastned
every moment, every morning God fetch'd
him up with the Rod ; and the Affliction
was so sore, and the Temptation so great,
that he knew not well how to bear the
B one,

one, or to overcome the other, until he came into the Sanctuary of God, *vers.* 17. Now coming into God's Sanctuary, there he learnt two sorts of Lessons; some in reference to the Prosperity of the Wicked, and others in reference to his own and the Godly's Adversity. First, in reference to the Prosperity of the Wicked, by coming into God's Sanctuary, he came to understand, that tho' God set them in high places, yet those high Places were slippery Places; and the higher the Place is, and the slipperier, the greater the Danger, and the sadder the Downfal. Secondly, He came to understand, that tho' God did set them high, yet many times he cast them down suddenly. So *Psal.* 37. *vers.* 35, 36. Thirdly, He came to understand, that all their Wealth and Riches would end at last in their own destruction; and that whatsoever Prosperity they did enjoy, it did but ripen their Sin, and hasten their Ruine. Fourthly, That God had an Eye on them for evil, in all the good things that he did dispense unto them; if He did set them on high, it was that they might have the greater fall; so when they were highest, that then they found the most slippery standing. Lastly, He came to learn, that all their Worldly Felicity was but a Dream: A man dreams he eats, and yet he is empty; he

he dreams he drinks, and yet he is thirsty; he dreams that he is rich, and yet he is poor; he dreams that he is a Prince, and yet he is but a Peasant. So all wicked men, when they come to awake at the Resurrection, they will find that all their Worldly Felicity was but a meer Dream, and that all their Pomp and Jollity here will end at last in everlasting Misery. But then, for his own Condition, and such as were godly.

Secondly, There were other Lessons and Things that he learnt, in reference to the Saints, in regard of his own and the Godly's Adversity. 1. That tho' he was never so much afflicted, yet that he was never the less belov'd; for a Child of God may be under sore Afflictions, and yet under dear Affections; as the Children of *Israel* in *Egypt* were under sore Afflictions, when all their Male Children were appointed for Slaughter, and all their Female Children for Slavery; they were then, of all other People in the World, the most afflicted, and yet, of all other People in the World, the best belov'd. And so the Prophet. Yet, 1. he had God's Presence with him, *ver.* 23. *Nevertheless*, says he, *I am continually with thee*; so that tho' he was afflicted, yet he was not deserted, for he could not be continually with God, unless that God were continually with him; and it were

better to be in the Fire with God, than out of the Fire without God ; better be in the fiery Furnace with Christ, than on *Nebuchadnezzar's* Throne without Christ. 2. Being in Affliction, he had God's guidance in ordering the Affliction for his good, that he would go along with him in the Affliction ; *We went through fire and water, and thou broughtest us out into a wealthier place,* Psal. 66. 12. We went through the Fire, we were not burnt or consum'd by it ; and we went through the Water, we were not drown'd in it, as *Pharaoh* and all his Host were. Thus the Saints of God of old had the Spirit of God of old, to lead and guide them, and at last to bring them into a wealthier place, the Land of *Canaan*, a Type of Heaven. So the Prophet ; God so guided him with his Counsel here, till he should bring him to Heaven, and so receive him into everlasting Glory. Thus the Prophet having compar'd together the condition of the Wicked and his own, and finding what a sad End the one came to, and to what a blessed End the other came, by this means the Providence came to be clear'd, the Prophet's Spirit quieted, and the Temptation vanquish'd ; so that here you have the Prophet coming out of Temptation with his Colours flying, and with his Heart enflam'd with Desires after God ;
Oh,

Oh, says he, whom, &c. The words are laid down by way of exaltation, in which the Prophet doth as it were boast of God as his Portion, and accounts his condition better by having *God the chiefest Good*, than any other whatsoever that hath not God. Hence I observe that,

Doctr. God himself is the chiefest Good that a Believer doth desire, either in Heaven or Earth.

There be many good things in Heaven, and many good things on Earth, but none of them all will satisfie a gracious Soul, without God himself. As for Heaven, there are such things as *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive*, what excellent things there are in Heaven: The Eye that may see much, and the Ear that may hear of more than the Eye can see; and the Heart of Man, that may imagine or conceive of more than either Eye can see or Ear can hear; and yet *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entred into the Heart of man to conceive* what excellent good things there are in Heaven; and therefore the Prophet speaks of them by way of admiration, *Psal. 31. 19.* Now those things that we speak of by way of admiration are

commonly such as exceed our comprehension ; and yet if God were not there, all those excellent things would never satisfy a gracious Soul without God himself. So there be many good things on Earth, for the Earth is full of the Riches of God's goodness : Now all the good things on Earth are but like *Paradise* without a Tree of Life : Take the best things that a Believer doth desire here upon Earth, and they will not satisfy him without God : Take the Ordinances of God, which are things very desirable to a gracious Soul, yet they will not satisfy without God himself ; they are but like Bones without Marrow, Dishes without Meat, Trees without Fruit, unless he can enjoy God in the Ordinance. The place of God's Worship, which was a very desirable thing to *David*, as you may see, *Psal. 27. 4. One thing have I desired of the Lord, says David, and that will I seek after : What to do? That I may dwell in the House of the Lord. What to do ! to behold the Beauty of the House ! no, tho' that was very beautiful, but to behold the Beauty of the Lord : It was not the Beauty of the House that did terminate David's desire, but the Beauty of the Lord. So Psal. 84. 1, 2. he cries out by way of admiration, How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts ! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth*

fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Unless he could enjoy the living God there, yet those Courts would be but as a desolate place, without the presence of the living God, and but as a dead Carcass when the Soul is gone. As the King's presence makes the Court, so it is God's presence that brings the Comfort to a gracious Soul; which made Luther say, *Mallem esse in inferno cum Christo, quam in Cælo sine Christo*; 'I had rather be in Hell with Christ, than in Heaven without Christ.

Now I shall endeavour, according to my poor ability, to set out to you, in some measure, what an excellent good God is, and so come to give you the grounds, why it is that his People desire him above all other things either in Heaven or Earth.

1. Because he can supply all their wants.
2. Because he can support them under all weaknesses.
3. Because he can subdue all their Adversaries.
4. Because he can deliver them out of all their Adversities.
5. Because he can cure all their Diseases.
6. Because he can forgive all their Sin.

1. He can supply all their wants, be they never so many, or never so great. So *Phil. 4. 19.* *My God, says the Apostle, shall supply all your needs, and that in the best way, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.* God is rich in Glory, and rich in Mercy, and rich in Grace, to all such as are in Christ Jesus. See how the Prophet bears himself up from God's being his Shepherd, *Psal. 23. 1.* *The Lord is my shepherd, says he, therefore I shall not want.* He doth not say, *The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore I have wanted for the time past; or, The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore I do not want for the time present; but, The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore I shall not want for the time to come.* For the time to come, a Believer is as certain to be reliev'd, as he hath been for the time past, or is for the time present. See how confidently the Prophet concludes that Psalm concerning himself for the future, from his present Enjoyments; *Surely, says he, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.* So *Psal. 34. 10.* there he brings in the Lions, the young Lions, that are best able to hunt after Prey, they shall sooner lack than they that hunt and seek after God shall want any thing that is good for them.

2. God

2. God supports and upholds them under all weaknesses, be they Bodily weaknesses, or Soul weaknesses, weaknesses of the outward or inward man: We need go no farther to prove this than the next Verse to the Text; the Prophet tells you how *his Flesh, &c.* *His Flesh fails,* there is the failing of his outward man; and *his Heart fails* him, there is the failing of his inward man. Then you have the Prophet's Relief, *But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

3. God can subdue all Adversaries, be they never so many or never so mighty, be they Ghostly Enemies or Bodily Enemies: Mark what the Apostle says to the *Romans*, and in them to all Christians, *Rom. 16. 20.* *The God, &c.* Doubtless the Apostle hath an allusion to the carriage of *Joshua* towards the five Kings that were in a Cave at *Makkedah*; they must be brought out, and they all must set their Feet upon the Necks of those Kings, and after they had done so, *Joshua* tells them, *Thus shall the Lord do to all your Enemies;* and *Thus,* says the Apostle, *the God of peace shall tread Satan under your feet.* It is the Saying of *St. John 4. 4.* *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them.* One would think the Apostle did rather discourage Believers than encourage them, in that he calls them

Chil-

Children and little Children, yet, says he, you *have overcome them*. How comes that about? For greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world: For indeed if God be for us, who then can be against us?

4. God can deliver out of all Adversities, be they never so many, or be they never so great. So *Psal. 34. 19. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers them out of them all.* Tindal's Translation renders it, *Great are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivers them out of them all.* So that be their Afflictions never so many, or their Troubles never so great, yet they have a God that can deliver them out of them all; out of six Troubles, and out of seven, that is, out of all sorts and kinds of Troubles God can deliver those that are his.

5. God can cure all Diseases: There is no Disease that is desperate, if God will undertake the cure; *He healeth the broken in heart, saith the Psalmist, 147. 3. and bindeth up their wounds.* There be many that can heal and bind up a broken Leg or a broken Arm, but none can bind up a broken Heart but God alone, that is the Heart-maker: And therefore *blest be the Lord, O my soul, saith the Prophet, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases.* Who can forgive Sins but God alone? And none can

can heal Soul-diseases but God alone.

6. God can forgive all Sin; and for this purpose he hath proclaim'd his Name, *Exod. 34. to be the Lord God, merciful, &c.* Iniquity and Transgression and Sin, to such as truly repent and turn from their Sins: Ay, but some Sins God cannot forgive, will some say, and that is the Sin against the Holy Ghost, God cannot forgive that Sin; whosoever thou art that sayest so, I say unto thee, if thou canst repent, God can forgive thee that Sin; but that is such a Sin as is accompanied with final Impenitency: Not but that God can forgive even that Sin, but God standeth upon his Prerogative in that point; God will not forgive that Sin: And therefore mark how expressly and peremptorily Christ utters those words concerning the Sin against the Holy Ghost, Christ doth not say it cannot be forgiven, but *it shall not be forgiven unto men, Matth. 12. 31.* And he is up with it again in the next Verse, *It shall not be forgiven unto him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come;* He being most resolv'd never to pardon that Sin. So that you see here six weighty Arguments why People should desire God, as the Chiefest Good that is to be had either in Heaven or Earth, because God can answer all their Demands. When God was to send *Moses* on a Message to the *Israelites,*

Israelites, about their deliverance out of Egypt, *If they say to me, says Moses, What is his name that sent thee? what shall I say unto them? Why, says God to Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto them, I Am hath sent me unto you. I Am, who is able to answer all your Demands. So if you ask, Who is able to supply all Wants? I am, says God. So if you should ask, Who is able to support us under all our Weaknesses? I am, says God. So if you should ask, Who is able to subdue our many and mighty Adversaries? I am is able to subdue them all. If it be ask'd, Who can deliver out of all Adversities? I am is able to deliver out of them all. So if it be ask'd, Who can cure all Diseases? I am can. So if it be ask'd, Who can forgive all Sin? I am, if any, can forgive all. So we see how happy they are that have God to go to, and what ground they have to desire him above all other, either in Heaven or Earth.*

Again, God's People desire him above all other things either in Heaven or Earth, because He is a suitable Good to the Souls of his People. When God had made a World of Creatures, yet amongst all that World of Creatures, there was not any one found a meet or suitable Help for Man, and therefore out of Man he made Woman, as a meet Help for him: so God having made

a World of Creatures, all the Creatures in the World are not able to make the Soul happy without God; and therefore says our Saviour, *What shall it profit a man to gain or win the whole world, and lose his own soul?* for the Soul is made for God, and came immediately from God, and never is at rest till it return again to God; and therefore says the Psalmist, 116. 7. *Return unto thy rest, O my soul:* This Rest is Christ; for what says Christ? *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* The Dove that was sent out of the Ark in the time of the Deluge, could find no rest for the Sole of her Foot, until she return'd again to Noah, into the Ark. So God hath written Vanity upon all the Creatures, that the Soul shall find no true rest in them all, until it return unto God, that at first made it. That which must make a thing happy, must be suitable to the nature of the thing that it maketh happy, and not heterogeneous to it. Doth the Ox feed upon Flesh, or the Lion feed upon Grass? No, these are things that are heterogeneous to their natures; but it is the Ox that feeds upon Grass, and the Lion that feeds upon Flesh. So, doth the Soul feed upon Pounds, Shillings and Pence, or the Self of the World? No; these are things that are not agreeable to the Soul, and there-

therefore the Spirit of God calls the rich man Fool, for singing such a *Requiem* to his Soul, *Soul take thine ease, for thou hast Goods laid up for many years, eat, drink, and be merry*; for all these were laid up for the Body, there was nothing at all laid up for his Soul. But it is God that is a Spirit, and that is the Judge of all, and of the *Spirits of just men made perfect*, and to whom all must come that will be made eternally happy: It is the having and feeding upon him by Faith, that is the Bread of Life, that must make the Soul truly and eternally happy; for *Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of man, that was God as well as Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no life in you*, John 6. 53. For his Flesh is Meat indeed for the Soul, and his Blood is Drink indeed to the Soul, and not any other thing. Now God is a suitable Good to the Soul; first, in respect of the Spirituality of the Soul; and secondly, in respect of the Eternity of it. As for the Spirituality of the Soul, that hath been spoken of in part already: God is a proportionable Good to the Soul, which nothing here below can be; all things here below that we labour for, they are but for the Body: *Solomon saith, All the labour of man is for his mouth*, Eccles. 6. 7. As for these things here below, they may answer Bodily Necessities, but they can go no farther, they

they cannot satisfy the Senses, much less the Soul: The Eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the Ear with hearing; if a man see one fine sight to day, he will be apt to desire to see another fine sight to morrow, and another after that, another after that, and so on, and will never come to be satisfied till he come to the Beatifical Vision, to behold God in his Glory: *Oh, says Moses, I beseech thee shew me thy glory*, Exod. 33. 18. *Philip saith unto Christ, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth*. But no sight else, besides the seeing of the Father in Christ, will satisfy a gracious Soul; that will, when nothing else can; but there is that in God that will abundantly satisfy it. So *Jer. 31. 14. Thus saith the Lord, I will, &c.* In the Hebrew it signifies a full and abundant satisfaction, the same word that is used *Psal. 36. 8.* where it is render'd, *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house: and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures*. Thou that art a Believer, shalt drink not out of a Cup or Bottle, but out of the River of God's Pleasures. As for the Creatures, they will nauseate sooner than satiate, but a man can never have enough of a River of Pleasures; if there were but one Pleasure, a man will be apt soon to grow weary, but this River will be always coming down with new Plea-

Pleasures ; for in Heaven, as one says, God will be often coming forth in new Suits of Glory, to give satisfaction to believing Souls.

2dly, God is a suitable Good to the Soul, in respect of the Eternity of the Soul. That which must make the Soul happy, it must run parallel with the Soul : The Plumb-line of the Creature cannot fathom the depth or reach of the Soul. All things here below, if they give any satisfaction to a man, it is but for a season ; so the Pleasures of Sin, they are but for a season ; but the Pleasures at God's right hand, they are Pleasures for evermore : The Pleasures here, they cannot be long, because Man's Life is but short ; the common age of the Life of Man is but threescore years and ten, and if a man come to fourscore years, he commonly hath a hard pull of it, and then the Thred of his Life is soon cut off, and we flee away, as a Bird out of a Cage or Net, and we are gone, the Soul having its flight, all the Pleasures of Life are gone. As for a great Earthly Estate, this cannot make a man truly and eternally happy : *Abraham* had a great Estate, but after *Abraham* was dead, his Estate went to *Isaac* ; it could call *Abraham* Master no longer : but after *Abraham* was dead, God was still call'd *Abraham's* God, *Matt. 22.* when *Abraham*

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ham had been dead many hundred years : And this hath made Believers so much to undervalue the things on Earth, in comparison of the things of Heaven, of God, and of Christ.

It is storied of *Basil*, that when the Proconsul attempted to turn him from the *Christian Religion*, with offering him much Honour and great Gifts; *Oh*, says he, *give me Honour that will endure for ever, and Money that will go in the other World, and then you say something to me; but all these are but a manly dole, and will do me no more good than while I have them in this World: but give me such Honour and Pleasures as will endure, and such Money as will go in the other World, and then you say something to me.*

3dly, As God is a proportionable Good to the Soul in general, so likewise to the several Faculties of the Soul, to make the Soul happy: As, *first*, to the Understanding Faculty of the Soul, to make that happy, it is said by our Saviour, *John 17. 3. This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. Adam* had abundance of Knowledge before the Fall, and when God brought all the Creatures before him at one Court, to name them, look what *Adam* call'd them, *that was the Name of them; as* if, as one says, God had written their
C Names

Names in their Natures, and *Adam*, by that excellency of Knowledge that he was endow'd withal, could read their Names in their very Natures, and so could call them as God had written them there. Now this was not Life eternal; for if *Adam* had not attain'd to know God in Christ, he had never come to know or enjoy Life eternal. Happiness is not barely to know God as he is consider'd in himself absolutely, but relatively in his Son; for God consider'd absolutely in himself, is a consuming Fire; but as He is consider'd relatively in his Son Christ, so He is a gracious and merciful Father. *Agur* was one of the wisest men of his Age, yet what was that which made him so? It was the knowledge of God in Christ, and all other knowledge was brutish, *Prov.* 30. 2. What tho' a man should know all Arts and Sciences, and all kind of Mysteries, yet if he did not attain to know God in Christ, all other knowledge would avail him nothing. The time will come, if thou dost not know God in Christ, that thou wilt wish thou never knew'st any thing, as *Nero* did, that he had never known to write, when he came to write his Name to the Condemnation of a Person. Wherefore, according to that ancient Saying, If thou know'st not Christ, all thy other knowledge will avail thee nothing; but if thou

thou know'st God in Christ, it matters not whether thou know'st any thing else, for the time is coming when God will put mens Knowledge in one Scale, and their Practice in the other Scale, and what is wanting in their Practice, will be made up in their Punishment. It is the Knowledge of God that is the chiefeſt Good, that perfecteth a man, all other Knowledge doth but debase him.

2dly, So God is a ſuitable Good to the deſiring Faculty of the Soul, and it is in reference to this Faculty that the Prophet ſpeaks in this ſaying, *I deſire nothing in Heaven or Earth in compariſon of thee*: For look, whatſoever the Soul can well deſire, it is all to be had in Chriſt. You have a clear place for this, *Prov. 3. 15. All things that thou canſt deſire are not to be compared to her.* It is ſpoken of Wiſdom in the Perſon of Chriſt, or in the behalf of him, *All that thou canſt deſire are not to be compared to him.* What cannot a man deſire? The Deſires of a man are exceeding vaſt; a man may deſire millions of Rocks of Pearls, Mountains of Diamonds, Ten thouſand Treasures of Gold and Silver; a man may deſire dominion over the Sun, Moon, and Stars, but whatſoever thou canſt deſire, it is not to be compar'd to Chriſt; therefore ſays the Pſalmiſt, *Whom have I in Hea-*

ven but thee? for all things here below will not satisfie the Desire of a gracious Soul without him; therefore says *David*, *Return unto thy rest, O my Soul*; intimating, that it hath a restless desire till it return unto God. The like remarkable place we have, *Psal.* 38. 10. *My heart panteth*: one renders it according to the Original, *My heart went panting* and braying up and down like an Ass, which is apt to bray and go up and down if it have no Fodder; so the Soul of Man, it is never at rest till it return to God.

Besides, God is a proportionable Good to all the Wants of the Soul; all the Wants that he can any way stand in need of, all may be supplied by Almighty God. Mark what God says to *Abraham*, *I am God all-sufficient, that can supply all wants*. It is not so with any Creature; some Creatures will help against some Wants, as Riches will help against Poverty, and Honour against Disgrace, but they will not help against Diseases, and therefore the Gout is call'd the Rich man's Disease, so far are Riches from helping against it: but now if you look unto the Lord, you shall find him suitable unto all your Wants. Mark what is said of Almighty God, *Psal.* 64. 11.

There be two main things that a man may want, he may want Provision, and he may

may want Protection ; now, for Provision, and to supply us with what is good, God will be a Sun ; and to protect us from what is evil, he will be a Shield. And further it is said, that God will give Grace ; which implies all spiritual good things in this World: and God will give Glory ; which implies all eternal good things in the World to come ; and further, that God will withhold no temporal good thing from such as are Believers, and are careful to walk uprightly.

Now for the fuller explanation of this, there be two places that I would have you to compare together ; first, that in *Mark* 10. 30. where it is said, *There is no man, &c.* but some may say, we shall have an hundred fold when we come to Heaven ; No, but none in this time, says Christ. But how can that be ? Can a man have a hundred Fathers, or a hundred Mothers, or a hundred Wives ? *Answer.* It is not to be understood *formaliter*, as if a man should have a hundred Fathers in kind, but *eminenter*, God will be better to him than a hundred Fathers or an hundred Mothers : therefore whatsoever a man wants is to be had in God, and to be enjoy'd in him in a more eminent manner. The other Scripture that I would have you to compare with it, that speaks the same Language, is *Rev.* 21. 17.

where it is said, *To him that overcomes will I give to inherit all things*: It is in the Original *τῷ νικῶντι*, *to him that is overcoming*, that doth maintain the Fight against Sin and Satan, he shall inherit all things. All things! you will say that is a very large Inheritance. What! all things! I, all things. How is that? Why, I will be his God, and that is Portion enough. So 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23.

4thly, God hath all that in him united which is divided and scatter'd up and down in the Creature: If you go to the Creature, you must, like Bees, suck many Flowers, because there is not enough in one. If men go to the Butchers for Meat, they go to the Bakers for Bread, and to the Brewers for Drink, and so patch up a Happiness from several places; and many times they knock at the Door where Emptiness dwells; but if they come to God, there all Good is to be had: And many trouble themselves in running to this Creature, and running to that Creature, whereas if they would come to Christ, they might have all; For it pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell, Col. 1. 19. So that the Good that is but scatter'd up and down in the Creature, is united in God, and to be had in God in a more eminent manner.

Thus, to instance in particulars, do God's People want a shelter. See what God says
to

to this, *Hof. 14. 8. I am a green Fir-tree: so that if they lack a shelter, God is like a green Fir-tree. Why doth He speak so? Because the Fir-tree is a Tree that hath the thickest Boughs, and when other Trees shed their Leaves in Winter, that is a Tree that abides always green in Winter, when there is most need of a shelter, and other Trees have no Leaves.*

Another place that I would have you take notice of is that, *Psal. 90. 1. Do God's People want a House? see how that was supplied in the Wilderness, where they had no Houses; Lord, says the Church, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. So when God's People were destitute of a place for God's Worship, which was a great trouble to God's People when they were in Babylon, and had their Temple demolish'd, Yet, says God, I will be a little sanctuary to them in the Countries where they come. Now when they were in Babylon, they sat down and wept when they remember'd Sion, and were depriv'd of the Temple, a magnificent Sanctuary, that they had at Jerusalem. Now where was their supply? Why, says God, I will be a little Sanctuary to you. God would make it up in a better way, though not in such an outward pompous way. So when his People wanted a River, yet then the glorious Lord will be to us a place of broad*

rivers and streams, Isa. 33. 21. and withal it is added, wherein shall no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby: It is a most glorious Promise, that the Lord would be better to them than any other River: It is true, Rivers were very advantageous to People, both for fruitfulness and defence, and for the bringing in of Riches. There were indeed but poor Rivers in Canaan: now, Where was the River that Israel should have to bring them in Treasure and Riches? It is true, says the Prophet, tho' you have no Nilus to brag of, as Egypt hath; nor Euphrates to boast of, as Babylon had; yet you have a glorious Lord to boast of, who will be a place of broad Rivers and Streams. And their Rivers, as they may bring them in Riches and Treasure, so they may let in an Adversary that may rob and spoil them of all their Riches and Treasure; but yours is such a River as no Man of War, or Galley with Oars, shall come up your River, to rob you of your Treasure: Thus God is able to answer all the Desires of his People.

U S E.

This may inform us how far the Desires of the Godly and the Men of the World differ: The men of the World they are for any good; as Psal. 4. 6. There be many that say,

say, Who will shew us any Good? The whole Life of a Christian is made up of holy Desires. Any Good will serve a carnal Heart, such as are Worldly; if they can have but Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, they care not for the Light of God's Countenance; as many, if they can have but the light of a Rush Candle, they care not for the light of the Sun, that glorious Light: whereas *the desire of the righteous is only good*, Prov. 11. 23. only God, that is the Chiefest Good. As for the Wicked, especially such as live in Pomp and Pleasure, *They say unto God, Depart from us*, Job 21. 14. *we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* They think themselves best then, when God and they are furthest asunder; but a Believer never better than when God and he can be together. Psal. 42. 2. Isa. 26. 8, 9.

This informs why it is so sad with such as are Believers, when God doth hide his Face, or seems to withdraw his Presence, or seems to depart from them; this is like the dropping of the Eyes out of the Head, and the darkning of the Sun in the Firmament, and the departing of the Soul out of the Body, or like the sinking of the Ship, where the Goods, and the Passengers, and Ship and all perish: This made Christ himself to cry out upon the Cross, not so much of his pains, or that his Friends and Disci-

Disciples had forsaken, as that his God had forsaken him, *Mat. 27. 46.* And this was a Dagger at *David's* Heart, when they cried out to him in his distress, *Where is thy God?* *Psal. 42. 10.* See how bravely he carries it at another time, when God was with him, *1 Sam. 30. 6.* tho' he was greatly distressed for *Ziklag*, where his Treasure was, that was gone, and his Wives they were gone, and the Hearts and Affections of People, they were gone, they were ready to stone him; but his God, that was chief Good, he was not gone, but still he took courage in the Lord his God. But see what a woful case *Saul* was in when God was gone from him; then he runs to a Witch, and then he cries to have *Samuel*, to whom in appearance when he was rais'd, he makes his moan; *Ob, says Saul, I am sorely distressed: Why, what is the matter? The Philistines make war against me; why so they had done formerly, and Saul had done well enough: Ob, but God is departed from me; that was that lay most heavy on his Heart, that God was departed from him. And this made Micah, when the Children of Dan had got but his false gods, to run after them, and to cry like a man that was mad, which made them to ask him what he ail'd? Ob, says he, you have taken away my gods, and what have I more to lose?*

SERMON II.

O N

PSAL. LXXIII. 25

Whom have I in Heaven but thee?

*And there is none upon Earth
that I desire besides thee.*

HAVING set out to you, how God is the greatest or chiefest Good that is to be had or desir'd to make one truly and eternally happy, I shall come now to shew how this God, that is thus good, may be had; *Thee I have*, says the Prophet.

Now there are two things that must accompany that Good that must make a man truly happy, *Proportion* and *Propriety*: I have shew'd already, how God is a proportionable Good to the Soul, every way suitable to make the Soul happy; I shall now come to shew you, how you may have a *Propriety* or *Interest* in this God, that is so exceeding good, for unless you have an *Interest* in him, what can you be the better for him?
there

therefore *Tolle meum, & tolle Deum*; Take away mine, and take away God: So for a man to know there is a Heaven, and not to know how to attain it; or to know that there is a Saviour, and not to know how to apply a Plaister of his Blood and Merits to the Hurts and Wounds of his Soul, what is he the better? What was the Prodigal better for all the Bread in his Father's House, if he must starve for hunger? So when a man was a drowning, and saw a Rainbow in the Sky, he cried out, What tho' all the World be not drown'd, yet if I be drown'd, what am I the better? So, tho' there be never so much Good in God, if I have no Interest in him, what am I the better for it? There is enough of Goodness in God to make the Devils happy, but they have no interest in Him, they cry out, *Jesus, thou Son of David, what have we to do with thee?* They have nothing to do with all the Good that is in God; but, says the Prophet, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee?* As much as to say, *but thee I have.* Now I shall come to shew you, first, how you *may* have Him, and then how you *must* have Him; for all men, according to the Apostle's Phrase, *Eph. 2. 12.* are *adversaries*, born without God in the World: We are no more born with an Interest in God, than we are born with Clothes upon our Backs: How comes it to pass

pass that God is one man's God, and not another's. There be some indeed that lay claim to God as theirs, that have no interest in Him, and God will not own them for His, as those at the latter day, that shall come to Christ, and shall knock at the Door of Mercy, and say, *Lord open to us*, and Christ shall answer and say unto them, *I know you not* whom you are; then they will be up with what they have done, and what Christ hath done; Why, Lord, say they, we have eat and drank in thy presence, we have had the honour to sit down at thy Table, and thou hast taught in our Streets, we have heard many a good Sermon from thee, and what not know us, Lord? No, *I know you not*, says Christ, *depart from me all ye workers of iniquity*. Thus there are many that will lay claim to God that have no interest in him. There be others again that do lay claim to God as their God, and God doth own and acknowledge their claim, such as single out God from all other gods. *This God is our God*, says the Church, *Psal.* 48. last. And so *Isa.* 25. 9. *This God is our God, we have waited for him*: And so *Psal.* 67. 6. *God, even our own God, shall bless us*. Where the Church lays a full gripe upon God, where the words are a Pleonasm, where one would have thought it had been enough to have said, *God, our God, shall bless*

us; but to make it more full and sure, it is added, *God, even our own God, shall bless us*: So that there be some that God will own their claim, tho' they be never so poor: We read, Believers, that they were such as wander'd up and down in Sheep-skins and Goat-skins, being afflicted, destitute, tormented, a company of poor Tatterdemalions, yet God was not ashamed to be call'd their God; it may be their Allies might be ashamed to own them, but the great and glorious God of Heaven and Earth was not ashamed of them. God is not ashamed of any because of their Poverty, if they be truly godly, but because of their Iniquity; else if they be godly, God will acknowledge them, that they have a just title so to do.

Obj. But some may say, How may a man come to have a Propriety and Interest in God?

Ans. God comes to be a man's God, 1st, by Election; 2^{dly}, by Donation; 3^{dly}, by Stipulation; 4^{thly}, by Union or Appropriation.

1st, By Election or Choice. First, God chuses us before all time to be his People, and then in time they chuse him to be their God; and God chuses us before all time to be his People, from all other People in the World,

World, to be his peculiar People. So *Eph.* 1. 4. *Who hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy.* Not that He did foresee that we would be holy, but that we should be holy, having a purpose to make us holy, and a peculiar people to himself, *zealous of good works*, *Tit.* 2. 14. Then in time God so orders it in his Providence, that they shall come to chuse Him to be their God from all other Gods in the World. You know how *Joshua* propounds the case, *Josh.* 24. 15. *Chuse whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers serv'd, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land we dwell: as for me and my house, we have made our choice already, we will serve the Lord.* How came *Dagon* to be the God of the *Philistines*? It was by choice, and therefore it is said, *Judg.* 5. 8. *when they chose new gods, and cast off the God of Israel, then was war in the gates; then they were plagued with all manner of evil, when they cast off Him that was the chiefest good, and seem'd to repent them of their choice.*

2dly, God comes to be ours by way of Donation, or by way of Gift, and that we have by gift is ours, as well as that which we buy with Money. First, God gives himself, and then his Son, to purchase Redemption for us, and then his Spirit to apply

ply Salvation to us; and, What is there better that God can bestow upon us than himself? It is said, *Heb. 6. 13.* God having no greater to swear by, *he sware by himself;* so God having no greater Gift to bestow, He bestows himself upon us, and so becomes ours.

3dly, God becomes ours by Stipulation, or by way of Covenant: So we become his, and He becomes ours. So *Ezek. 16. 8.* *I entred into covenant with thee,* says God, *and thou becamest mine.* How came God to be *Abraham's* God? It was by way of Covenant. So *Gen. 17. 7.* How comes such a Woman to be the Wife of such a Man, and such a Man to be the Husband of such a Woman, from all other in the World? It is by vertue of the Marriage Covenant. So God says of his People, *Fer. 3. 14.* and so *Fer. 31. 31, 32, 33.* Thus the Lord became *Jesus Christ's* God. As Christ was Man, and Mediator between God and man, we find Christ crying out to him upon the Cross as his God; but how came He to be Christ's God? This was by vertue of a Covenant with him: We read, there were Transactions between God and him before the World was: So *1 Tim. 1. 9.* there was Grace and Eternal Life given us before the World began; a Purpose there might be then, but a Promise to us there could not be

be, because we had then no Being, unless as we were consider'd in his Son. We read to this purpose of the Lamb's Book, *The book of life, in which all their names were written that were ordained to eternal life.* It is true, Christ as God was equal to the Father ; but as Christ was Mediator, and so undertook to bring many Sons and Daughters to Glory, so all their Names were set down in the Lamb's Book.

Lastly, This comes by vertue of this Union ; and the application that Faith makes between Christ and a Believer ; for *Fides individuificat Deum*, Faith doth appropriate God to a man's self, and thus He comes to be the God of his People, and they come to have a Propriety in Him. Consider how Christ suffer'd the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us or reconcile us to God, that he might atone us, and make us as it were one with God. We lost God's Favour and God's Image by *Adam's* Fall ; and not only so, but we lost all Propriety and Interest in God. Now *Christ* is given to bring us back to God by way of reconciliation ; But how ? Why by Union with himself ; for by Faith we become one with him, and he becomes one with us ; we become, by Faith, Members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones : And as upon civil Marriage there ensues a

mutual Propriety between Man and Wife, so here Faith doth unquestionably preceede the Testimony or Assurance; for no part of Christ's Purchase can be settled upon you and seal'd unto you, till you have a part in Christ, and are united to him by Faith.

Thus I have endeavour'd to shew you how you may have him; I shall next come to shew you how you must have him.

1. First, you must have him in respect of his Person, your Desires must be most after Him, rather than His. The Psalmist doth not say, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee?* but *Whom have I in Heaven but thee?* We should not so much desire Him for the good things that come from Him, as for the goodness that is in Him. For a Woman to marry a Man meerly for his Money or Worldly Estate, this is Harlotry Love, and not that Conjugal Affection that ought to be between Man and Wife. A Believer is not immediately united to the Graces or Benefits that come by Christ, but to the Person of Christ: There is a personal Union betwixt Christ and a Believer, so that a Believer can say, *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.*

Secondly, You must have Him as your Portion: A little will serve a Believer for his Provision, but it is not all the World that

that will serve him for his Portion. When *Thomas Aquinas* was ask'd by the Lord from Heaven, *What shall I give thee for all the good services thou hast done me?* his Answer was, *Da teipsum Domine*, Lord, give me thy self, I ask no other gift. And it was the Saying of another, *Lord, let me live in the World with thee, but let me not live out of the World without thee.*

Again, We must have Him outwardly in our Estates, and inwardly in our Hearts. An interest in an Estate, without an interest in God the chiefest Good, it is like a Bone without Marrow, a Dish without Meat, a Tree without Fruit, an Eye without Sight. *Wisdom is good*, saith the Wise man, *with an Inheritance*; so an Inheritance is good with God the chiefest Good, without whom nothing else is good; thy Treasure is but Trash, vile refuse matter; thy Silver is but Canker, thy Gold but Rust, without Christ.

As we are to have God outwardly in our Estates, so inwardly in our Hearts: When an Unbeliever comes into a Christian Congregation, and beholds your behaviour and comely order, he will be apt to fall down on his Face, and to worship God, and confess that God is in you of a truth, *Salvum sit istud verbum Domine*, says St. Bernard, The good Lord make that Word good,

that God is in us of a truth. There be two great Truths, as one observes of two great Apostles, St. Paul and St. John; in the one we are said to dwell in God, 1 Job. 4. 16. *He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God*; he is as it were God's Inmate, God's Inhabitant, and in that sense God may be said to have us in possession: In 2 Cor. 6. 16. *Ye, &c.* and in this sense God is our Inmate, and so we have him in possession. Now where there is this mutual dwelling one within another, that we dwell in God, and God dwells in us, that God hath possession of us in one kind, and we of Him in another; surely this Tenure cannot be alter'd, we and our God shall never part, none shall ever separate us.

Again, We must have God in our minds, *Oh, my meditation of him shall be sweet*, says the Prophet, *Psal. 104. 34.* A Believer rous thoughts of God in his mind, like a lump of Sugar, or that which is sweet and pleasant to the taste, but wicked men they *mind earthly things*, Phil. 3. 19. they run in their thoughts on things below, and cannot lift them up to things above; God, says the Psalmist 10. 3. *is not in all his thoughts.*

Again, We must have God in our Memories: Doubtless it is a very great Sin for a People to forget the God that made them; Yet now, saith Elisha, *where is God my maker,*

maker, who giveth songs in the night? But what saith the Psalmist, 9. 17. *The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God.* But, oh! what great Ingratitude is it, to forget the Mercies and the Loving-kindness of God? Many deal by the Mercies of God as *Jobn* dealt by *Jebo-ram's* Messengers, who bid them turn behind him; so they turn Mercies behind them, when their own turns are serv'd, and think no more of him that is the Author of all their Mercies. We read *Ezek.* 6. 9. how God made an Order concerning the Peoples going into the Temple, and coming out of the Temple, That he that came in at the North Gate must go out at the South Gate, and he that came in at the South Gate must go out at the North Gate: They might in no wise return by the way of the same Gate that they came in at, but go forth over against it: One gives a very notable reason of it, *Ne propitiatorio terga verterent, cum à templo exirent*; lest that they should turn their Backs to the Propitiatory or Mercy Seat, when they went out of the Temple, for that was such a thing that God could not endure; that when they had pray'd and obtain'd Mercy, they should go unmannerly away, and turn their Backs upon his Mercy-seat, intimating, that when God hath shew'd himself gracious unto us,

and hath granted us the Desires of our Hearts, and the Requests of our Lips, we must then take heed that we do not turn our Backs upon God when our own Turn is serv'd, as Beasts turn their Backs to the Pond when their thirst is quench'd. So dealt the *Israelites* by God their Saviour and Satisfier; He sent them Meat enough, and that of the best too, Angel's Bread, Manna from Heaven, and Quails, that were Dainties for Kings: *The people, says the Apostle, 1 Cor. 10. sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play*, there was Meat-offerings and Drink-offerings, but no giving of Thanks; but

*He that eateth and drinketh, and letteth Grace pass,
Sitteth down like an Ox, and riseth like an Ass.*

People are apt to forget God most when He is best to them, so bad a requital do we make of the Riches of his Goodness; and therefore doth God often caution his People, *Deut. 10.* and elsewhere, that when he had fed them to the full, they should not be unmindful of Him that was the Author of all their Mercies; and indeed, as we do desire that God should have us in remembrance in our Want and Poverty, so let us have God in remembrance in our Peace
and

and Plenty, *Deut. 8. 18. Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth:* Let those that are wealthy take notice of this in particular. If thou art one that art rich, assure thy self thou couldst have no power to get an Estate, unless it were given thee from above; it is God that giveth thee power to get Wealth, thou mightest else have been as poor as he that begs at thy Door; but it is God's Blessing upon thy Endeavours, it is He that stops the holes at the bottom of the Bag, and secret Drains and Issues, at which other mens Estates run out. Thou therefore that art rich, must have God in a more especial manner in remembrance: Thou must have God in reverence; those that would serve God aright, they must do it with Reverence and Godly Fear, *Heb. 12. 28. they cannot do it with Reverence enough; Psal. 95. 6. O come let us worship and bow down,* says the Church, and she is at it again in the same Verse, *Let us kneel before the Lord our maker.* The holy Angels cover both their Faces and their Feet, when they are in God's presence, and the glorified Saints, fall upon their Faces when they worship God, *Rev. 11. 17. and cast down their Crowns at the Feet of Christ.* Now if the glorious Angels and glorified Saints do thus, oh, with what Humility should we

which are but sinful Dust and Ashes, crawling Worms of the Earth, address our selves to God withal ! Power of Godliness will bring under both the outward and inward man. Oh ! if we come to God, to prefer our Prayers and Petitions to him, if we do not then serve him, and observe him with the greatest reverence, how can we hope to be accepted of him, and our Petitions granted ? We must not offer up our Souls, but our Bodies, *Rom. 12. 1.* being both made for him, and redeem'd by him ; for doubtless the Lord takes notice what posture we use in his Worship.

We must have God to be our Partner in our Adversities, for we are not able to bear the least Affliction without his help, as *Simon of Cyrene* was fain to help our Blessed Saviour to bear his Cross, *Matth. 27. 32.* So our Blessed Saviour must help us to bear our Cross, or else we shall never bear it aright, and as we ought to do: *Simon* was compell'd to bear our Saviour's Cross, but our Saviour needs not to be compell'd to bear our Cross, for indeed he offers himself so to do, saying, *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest, I will ease you, Matth. 11. 28.* And so in all our Afflictions He is said to be afflicted, as a Tutor in the University, that undertakes to pay his Pupil's Charges, if he punishes

nishes his Pupil, in so doing he punishes himself; and to be sure then He will punish us no more than needs must: *And therefore,* says the Apostle, *ye are afflicted if need be.* God sees that the Rod is as needful for his Children as Bread.

We must have God to be our Part-taker against all our Adversaries, and then if God be for us, who then can be against us? as Rom. 8. 31. A Believer is able to challenge all the World, having God on his side; whereas if God be departed from a person, that person must needs be in a desolate and disconsolate condition; as we see in the case of *Saul*, for he, to relieve himself, when he was in a disconsolate condition, raises up *Samuel*, who complains, *Why hast thou disquieted me?* seeing he was gone to his rest; but it was *Saul* that was disquieted, as those that are disquieted themselves, will be apt to disquiet others: *Ob!* says *Saul*, *I am sore distressed;* Why, what is the matter, *Saul?* why, *the Philistines make war against me;* why so they have done formerly, and thou hast done well enough; *I, but God is departed from me:* *I,* that was matter of grief indeed; this made our Saviour cry out upon the Cross.

Now see how bravely *David* bears up, having God on his side; *David's* case seems far worse than *Saul's*, for *Saul* at that time had

had an Army in the Field, and all *Israel* were gather'd to him to go against them: *David* doubtless was very deeply distressed, for *Ziklag*, the City where *David's* Treasure was, that was burnt with Fire, and his Wives were carried Captive, they were gone, and the Hearts of his People they were one too, for they spake of stoning of him, but yet his God was not gone; but *David* still encourag'd himself in the Lord his God, 1 *Sam.* 30. 6.

Now to come to some farther Use. It serves, first, to reprove such as have their Desires carried out chiefly after things below, and not after things above; after things on Earth, and not after the God of Heaven. Now this Text speaks Terrour to every one that lives without God in the World, that is the chiefest Good. There be three *without's*, as I may so speak, that are mention'd in the Old Testament in one Chapter, in 2 *Chron.* 15. 3. where it is said, *For a long season Israel had been without the true God, and without a teaching Priest, and without Law.* It is sad to be without a teaching Priest, to be without one to break the Bread of Life to them, for where there is no Vision, there the People perish: And so to be without the Law is exceeding sad, when all things run to confusion: So it is spoken of as a sad time when there was no King

King in *Israel*, and every one did that which was right in his own Eyes; but the worst of all was, that they were without the true God, that was the chiefest Good, and therefore *Wo be to them*, says God, *when I depart from them*, Hof. 9. 13. for when God goes, then all Evils come; as we see in that 2 Chron. 15. 5. *In those days*, that is, when God was gone, *there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in*; for abroad the Sword bereav'd, by reason of the Enemy without; and at home there was a Death, by reason of the Famine within: *great vexations were upon all the countries*, when God was gone, Nation was destroy'd of Nation, and City of City; for it is said, God did vex them with all Adversity. And as there were three *without*s that were gather'd from one Verse in the Old Testament, so there may be five *without*s gather'd from one Verse in the New Testament, *Ephes. 2. 12*. The first is, they are said to be *without Christ*, and better be Fatherless and Motherless, and Friendless, than Christless. And so to be Aliens from the Commonwealth of *Israel*, what is that, but to be out of the Church? for he that is without Christ the Head, must needs be without the Church the Body, and so without all the Ordinances of Christ. Their case was like theirs that were out of the Ark in the
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Deluge, there were none saved but *Noah*, and those that were in the Ark, all the rest perish'd. So do all they that are out of the Church, and so by consequence out of Christ, for he is the Saviour only of such as are Members of his Body. And then thirdly, to be Strangers to the Covenants of Promise, that is another *without*, for the Covenant doth hold forth Life and Salvation by the Blood of Christ. Now to be without this Covenant, what a dismal and lamentable condition is such a person in ! he must needs be destitute of all the Promises by Christ, and so without all Hope ; and how woful is the case of such a one as is in distress, to be without all Hope ! for God is the Hope of *Israel*, and so to be without Him is to be without all true Hope ; and so it must needs be, for they be without Him that is the Chiefest Good, without whom nothing else is good ; so that this is the very bottom and dregs of the Vial of the Wrath of God, to be without God in the World ; and therefore it infinitely concerns every one to get a propriety and interest in God the Chiefest Good, for if he hath not the Lord for his God, he sins against the First Commandment, which is *Caput mandatorum Dei*, the first and chief of all the Commandments of God, and if you do not keep that, all the rest of the Commandments fall to ground,

ground, and are as nothing. There be three parts of the first Commandment, 1st, that we must have a God; and 2^{dly}, that we must have the God of Heaven for our God; and 3^{dly}, that we must have no other for our God, but only him that is the chiefest Good that is to be had in Heaven or Earth, for God will admit no Rivals. I remember there is a Story related by *Baronius*, That *Tiberius Caesar* Emperor of *Rome* hearing of the famous Acts that Christ did, he did proponnd it to the Senate, which was their Parliament, that Christ might be enroll'd among the Gods; but the Senate return'd that Answer, That could not be, because he will be God alone, or else he will not be God at all. So that you must consider which way those great workings of the Soul tend, what they are chiefly carried out after, what thou makest the chief Object of thy Trust, and what the chief Object of thy Love, and what the chief Object of thy Hope, and what the chief Object of thy Fear, and what the chief Object of thy Desire, and what the chief Object of thy Delight, and what the chief Object of Joy, then thou maist conclude, that God the chiefest Good is thine, and that thou art in a state of Salvation: So that for any to give those great Acts of the Soul to any other but God, God is not the chiefest Good

Good of that Soul: So if thou trustest in uncertain Riches, in so doing thou makest *Mammon* thy God, and so the God of Heaven is not thy God. So if thou makest thy Father, or thy Wife, or Child, or Friend, which is as thine own Soul, any of these the chief Object of thy Love, thou dost not love God as thou oughtest to do, and as He deserves: Not but that thou maist love and ought'st to love them with a subordinate Love, but not with the chief or cream of thy Love; other things may have the Float of your Love, but God must have the Cream of your Love. So for your Hope, God must be the chief Object of your Hope; He is call'd *the Hope of Israel, the Hope of his People*, Jer. 14. 8. And so *David*, when he was much disquieted and cast down, gives a charge to his Soul, still to *hope in God*, *Psal.* 42. 11. and so likewise, *Psal.* 146. 3, 4.

After the same manner we must make God the chiefeft Object of our Fear: Our greatest care should be to please him, and our greatest fear should be how we offend him; better offend all the World than offend God: Therefore says the Prophet *Isaiab* 8. 13. *Sanctifie the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.*

Again,

Again, God being the chiefeſt Good, ought to be the chiefeſt Object of our Deſire, according to the words of the Text, *There is nothing, ſaith the Prophet, in Heaven or Earth, that I deſire in compariſon of thee.* And ſo the Church, *Iſa. 26. 8, 9.*

So the chief Object of our Delight ſhould be in the Lord, and this is the way to obtain our Hearts deſire, *Pſal. 37. 4.* Thoſe therefore that delight more in carding, and diceing, and drinking, and riotous feaſting, and dancing, they are none of thoſe that deſire and delight in God above any other thing in Heaven or Earth: The godly man *delights in the Law of the Lord, and meditates on that day and night, Pſal. 1. 2.*

Laſtly, God himſelf is the chief Object of a Believer's Joy; *I will go, ſays the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. 43. 4. unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding or great joy: And ſo the Church.* When there was a Famine upon the face of the whole Earth, when the Fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall Fruit be in the Vines, and the labour of the Olive ſhall fail, and the Fields ſhall yield no meat, the Flock ſhall be cut off from the Fold, and there ſhall be no Herd in the Stall, yet a Believer can laugh in the Face of Famine, according to that of *Eliphaz, in Job 5. 22.* And ſo the Church, in the place I nam'd before, *Habb. 3. 17, 18. Yet will I rejoyce in*

in the Lord ; I will joy in the God of my salvation.

Thus, if we desire God as the chiefest Good, we will then make God the chief Object of these seven great acts or goings-out of the Soul, but not else.

U S E.

This speaks wonderful Terrour to every one that lives without God in the World.

Now to every Unregenerate Man, that is unconverted, it speaks Terrour upon several accounts.

1st, Because thou livest in the neglect of the great Commandment of the Law, which is the very Foundation of all the other Commands, for the great Commandment is, *Thou shalt have Jehovah, the great God of Heaven and Earth, for thy God.* Now if thou art careful to observe all other Commands, and neglectest this, all thy obedience to this will come to nothing, neither canst thou observe the rest without this. The Law of God is written in every Believer's Heart, and the Law of God is cast into a Believer's Heart as into a Mould, and Believers are said to obey from the Heart the Form of Doctrine that is deliver'd to them; so that the life of a Believer's Life is the Coun-

Counterpane of the Law, written in a Believer's Heart, so that their Lives ought to be answerable to it. Those therefore that talk much, and seek to make great Conscience of lesser Commands, that cry out of Superstition, because of some superfluous things in the Worship and Service of God, and in the mean time neglect the great matters of the Law, are much like *Saul*, that was very strict for the keeping of a rash Vow, that his own Son *Jonathan*, but for licking a little Honey, must die; but *Saul* had no care to have *Jehovah* for his God, to obey his Voice.

2dly, Thou sinnest against the three great Promises of the Gospel, concerning all the three Persons, where God says, *I will be thy God, I will give thee my Son, and thou shalt have my Spirit.*

3dly, Consider if thou hast not *Jehovah* the God of Heaven for thy God: Thou hast the God of this World for thy God; that is, indeed thou hast the Devil for thy God. Man was never made to be his own God, or to be a God to himself; so that he that misses of the God of Heaven for his God, he hath the God of this World for his God; but there are but few that imagine any such matter. But mark what the Apostle says of the *Gentiles*, 1 Cor. 10. 20.

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that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to Devils, and not to God. So likewise Deut. 32. 17. Rev. 9. 20. it is said, that they repented not that they worshipped Devils. Oh, what a woful case are they in that have the Devil for their God !

Lastly, He that hath not *Jehovah* for his God, hath *Jehovah* for his Enemy; and let me tell you, God is the best Friend, but the worst Enemy, that any can have: Therefore says the Prophet, Jer. 17. 17. *Be not thou a terror to me*: Better have all the World a terror to us, than God a terror to us; therefore labour what lies in you to have God, that is the chiefest Good, to be yours.

Now there are four things in the nature of this Interest that may provoke you to labour for it.

First, It is a Propriety with Community.

Secondly, It is a Propriety that is accompanied with the greatest Excellencies.

Thirdly, It is a Propriety with Universality.

Fourthly, With Perpetuity.

First, It is a Propriety with Community. It is proper only to the Godly, and it is common to all that are godly: As Salvation
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tion is call'd *common Salvation* by the Apostle, *Jude 3.* not that all shall be sav'd, but it is common to all such as are sav'd; and yet withal it is proper, because it belongs only to such. So this Propriety with Community: for tho' it be proper only to the Godly, yet it is common to all that are so; and therefore the Apostle wishes happiness, *1 Cor. 1. 2.* *To all that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints; with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.* So God is a common Good to all that live godly in Christ Jesus: *Et bonum quod communis, eo melius;* As the Sun is better than a Taper or a Candle, because a Candle gives light but to a few, but the Sun gives light to all: so Bread is better than a Sail or Rudder, because a Sail or Rudder is common to a few, but Bread is common to all. Now God being such a common Good, more especially to his own People, oh, what Comfort doth this afford to the poorest and meanest Members of the Lord, that they all drink of the same Cup, and all sit at the same Table with *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, in the Kingdom of Heaven. *Abraham*, tho' he were the *Father of the Faithful*, and the strongest in the Faith, yet hath not a better God to trust in than the weakest Believer hath,

that truly believeth : And doubtless it must needs do them good, to think that they all eat of the same Spiritual Meat, and that they drink of the same Water of Life with the best of the Saints and Servants of God.

Secondly, It is a Propriety that is joyn'd with the greatest Excellency. You cannot have a Propriety or Interest in a greater or better Good ; He is a God, and the best God ; He is a Father, and the best Father ; He is a Husband, He is a Friend, and the best Friend ; He is a Master, and the best Master ; He sets his Servants about the best Work, and He affords his Servants the best Assistance ; He not only bids them do, but He helps them for to do what he requires of them to be done : *Lord, says the Church, thou workest, or hast wrought, all our works in us, or for us.* The least Work shall not go without a great Reward ; none shall so much as kindle a Fire for him, or give but a Cup of cold Water in his Name, but it shall have a sure Reward ; God will not be unmindful of the Labour of Love that any one shews for his Name sake : Whereas Satan is the worst Master, and he sets you about the worst Work, and he pays the worst Wages, for the Wages of Sin is Death ? And who would not quit or cast off

off the Service of such a bad Master, to be imploy'd in the Service of a merciful God, that is the best Master in Heaven or Earth?

Thirdly, This Propriety and Interest is joyn'd with Universality : It is like the Interest that a Wife hath in the Husband's Estate, which reaches not only to his Person, but also to all that doth appertain unto him ; and therefore saith the Husband, *With all my worldly Goods I thee endow*. And so says the Apostle to all Believers that have a Saving-interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, *1 Cor. 3. 22. All things are yours : whether Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas, or the World, or Life, or Death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours.* So that when God comes to be ours, all good things come to be ours. As when a man comes to be my Friend, not only his House is my Friend, his Horse is my Friend, but his Sword is my Friend also : So, when God is our Friend, and reconcil'd unto us, not only his Goodness is our Friend, his Mercy is our Friend, but his Justice is our Friend also. *Thy rod and thy staff*, says the Prophet, *Psal. 23. they comfort me.* Not only his Staff to support him, but also His Rod to correct him, they both afforded Comfort to David.

Fourth

Fourthly, and lastly, It is a Propriety or Interest with Perpetuity; it is not a Lease for a term of Years, and then expires, but it is for ever: *This God is our God, for ever and ever*, says the Church, *Psal. 48. last.* The Propriety or Interest that a man hath with his Wife, it is not lasting, at least while it is not everlasting; at least while it is but till Death us do part; but the Interest that is between God and a Believer, it is an everlasting Interest; *I have loved thee*, says God, *with an everlasting love.* This is the happy condition of such as have the God of Heaven for their God.

FINIS.



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